

Literature.

A BLESSING.

BY ELIZA COOK.

As I wandered beside the blue measureless tide,
While the water and winds were at play,
A woman, forlorn, pale, weary and worn,
Arose like a ghost in my way.
Her famine-wrung sigh, and her grief-dimmed eye,
Were heavy with moan and tear,
As I placed in her palm a drop of the balm
Which the world holds so preciously dear;
And this blessing she gave as she turned to the wave
And gazed up to the azure dome—
"May your happiness be as deep as the sea,
And your heart as light as the foam."

THE RUINED CHAPEL.

About a mile and a half from Castletown, the metropolis of the Isle of Man, there is a bay, with a small hamlet and pier in it called Derby Haven. I walked to it lately one fine afternoon from Castletown. My way lay along the coast over the turf which fringed the beach, and which goes by the name of the race-course. Whatever this might have been, it is now so broken up and bumpy, that a race on it would be a steep-chase. It was a lovely day, the wind had dropped, and I could hear distinctly the shrill chattering of a parcel of gulls, which were walking about at the edge of the water where the low tide had left long streaks of flat wet sand. The harbor is formed by an island, now approached by a narrow artificial causeway. Towards the sea, this is edged with sharp rocks, whose strata turn inwards like teeth—sure to hold fast any ill-fated ship which once they touch. There are two buildings on the island—one a circular, deserted fort, built by an Earl of Derby to help the cause of the Stuarts, but long since unused, either for the purpose of defence or refuge. It is squat, circular, and upright. One small turret has been built on the wall, for the purpose of shewing a light by night, and a white mark by day, to the vessels which enter the harbor. This gives the fort a prick-eared appearance, and makes it look like a Cheshire cheese with a pepper-castor standing on it. The other of the two buildings on the island is not only deserted, but in ruins. It was a Roman Catholic chapel, and the ground around is still used as a burial-place for Romanists. The roof of the building has fallen in, and nothing is left but four walls, which appear as much worn by the weather within as without, showing that very many years must have passed since they were shielded by a roof. The chapel, which is built of stone, looks as if it had been ruined soon after its erection, and for some cause or another, had never been restored.

There was not a living human creature on the whole island but myself and one old man, who was crawling in aimless sort of way among the rocks, as if he had lost himself and could not get out. I sat down and watched him. The turf was soft, and a great piece of gray rock gave good rest for my back. He was, as I said, groping slowly about among the sharpest, barest looking shelves of rock. I wondered what he could be looking for. Eggs? No; the tide flowed where he was; no eggs could lie there. Seaweed? No; there was plenty of that on the flat shore; and I could then see from where I lay a horse and cart engaged in carrying it away to one of the neighboring farms, where it is used as manure. I got quite curious about my old man. There he was, with wagging head and slow rheumatic limbs, peering patiently about, and every now and then picking something up. The old man was looking for firewood, and there being hardly any trees in this part of the island, went "picking" on the shore. The fuel on his hearth would often tell strange stories, if one could hear it speak; logs from which the numb fingers of drowning men had at last relaxed their hold; oar blades, which had struck ice in arctic seas, or stirred the long grass in some tropical creek; charred scraps, which had hissed in the water as they fell from a burning ship out in the middle of the sea; thin ribs of island-boats, which had put in and out for many years, till some rough night they touched the rocks, and cracked like eggs.

What a bundle of history the old man tied on his back at last, he and it alike in the last chapter of the tale! As he crept towards me, I thought of questioning him about the ruined chapel which was there; perhaps he might know its history or legend: so with a general meteorological preface, I asked what he could tell me about it, and gave him a good cut off a piece of cavendish I had in my pocket as a retainer.

"Sir," said he (I leave out the Manx, also his critique on my essay about the weather,) "sir, I am growing an old man now, and it's as much as I can do to get these few sticks; but I've seen more things worth picking here than them in my day."

"Such as wrecks?" I suggested.

"Ay, you are right there, sir. Time was when a poor man might get a chance; but now, what

with your light-houses and life-boats, and coast-guard, and police, either them that owns the wreck get ashore all right, and avaricious after their things; or if so be they don't, 'tain't often you get much more than the value of these few out of a ship, not even when she goes to pieces.

"Why, sir," he continued, "not long ago, there was a vessel wrecked off Scarlet; she was loaded with flour (a French ship she was,) and that they sold by auction."

"Ah!" said I soothingly, "times are changed. But talking of the past, can you tell me why this chapel here came to be pulled down, and why they don't keep the pigs from grubbing about among the graves?"

"Why, yes," he replied, "I can; not that I saw it done myself, but there ain't a house about here where that tale ain't told on winter evenings."

After a little pressing, the old man slowly swung his bundle of sticks off his back, seated himself on a stone, fixed his eyes on the ruin, and recited this legend, which I give in my own language.

Many years ago, there was a famous priest who gave up all that he possessed and came to teach Christianity in these parts. He was not a Manksman, though he could talk with the people in their own tongue. He lived in a poor house in Derby Haven, but, for all that, there was not a sick or needy person near but what he helped with medicine and food, as well as spiritual advice. Along with a kind heart, he had a kind face and voice, so that the little children would run out to laugh and kiss his hand when they saw him pass. For a long time he used to gather the people together in the winter evening in one of the largest rooms in the hamlet, while in the summer he would preach to the fishermen and their families on the sea-coast.

After some years of this intercourse, he proposed to the men that they should build a small church on the island. St. Michael, he said, had appeared to him in a vision, and pointed out a chapel on a flat space upon the grass close to the rocks; he had seen it, he said, quite plain in his dream; the light was shining out of the window; he crept up under the wall, and looked in, and lo! there he saw himself kneeling before a costly altar, and he recognised the congregation as themselves.

Now, while they were full of admiration at this dream, the good father bade them rise up and follow him to the place where he had seemed to see the chapel, and lo! when they got there, they found the ground marked out where the foundation of the chapel now stand, and a border drawn some distance around on which that wall was built, which you can now trace in the grass, just as if some one had turned up a furrow on the bare earth, and then laid a carpet of turf upon it. And when the men of the place saw the marvel, and how truly the good father's dream had been from Heaven, he bade them kneel down there at once while he prayed to St. Michael and all angels that these people would not leave off the good work till they had built a chapel to him. Thus they were led to begin, and promised to give a portion of their time till the little church should be finished.

There was abundance of stone close by, and the architecture of the edifice was of the simplest kind. Four plain thick walls with a roof was all they aimed at. Now, this part of the work was comparatively easy; but Father Kelley began to be sore perplexed as it approached completion, how he should furnish it within, and so fulfil the dream in providing such a costly altar as he was persuaded he ought to build. The poor people had neither silver nor gold. They had already offered such as they had—strong hands, and hours taken from their rest to work. Father Kelley used to repair to the chapel, now roofed in, and pray to St. Michael to help him in this strait. One dark evening, he was there longer than usual; he had fallen down with his face up on the ground before the spot in which he hoped to put the altar. While thus prostrate in prayer, and longing for a continuation of his former dream, he heard some footsteps outside the chapel walls. Having his face upon the earth, the sounds came distinctly to his ear. They stopped, and a voice said: "This is the chapel; let us lay them here; 'tis just the place for a burial."

"Very well," replied another, "how does she lie? Here goes, mate, by the north-east corner."

Then came the sound of digging, and pauses, as if men were stooping down to lay something in the ground; after that Father Kelley heard the mould put back, and some one stamp it down. Though the church had not been furnished, two or three funerals had taken place in the grave-yard, one of which he had himself celebrated only that afternoon.

What could the object of these strange night-visitors be? They had not disturbed the dead—they did not remain long enough for that; their work, whatever it was, seemed to be accomplished in a quarter of an hour, after that time he heard a slapping of hands, as if some one were cleaning them of the dusty earth, and a voice saying: "There! that is done; and as dead men tell no tales, we may trust the present company."

"Ay ay," replied the other, "I trust them so much. I don't think we need wait any longer."

"What! art afraid, man?"

"Not I; but there is foul weather coming, and the sooner we clear off these cursed rocks, the better."

"Well—come along!"

Then Father Kelley heard them walk down towards the water, and presently distinguished the grating of a boat's keel as she was pushed off; then the double sounds of the oars in the rowlocks died away, and all was still. He got up from the floor, and walked out of the chapel. It was a midsummer night. The air was warm and motionless; clouds, however, had crept up so plentifully as to cover the sky. While he stood there outside the chapel, the moon, which was about a week old, became obscured, and the darkness drew close to his eyes. He could not see a yard before him; he listened, but heard only the slow wash of the swell as the rising tide carried it into the clefts among the rocks, with now and then a liquid flap, as a wave ran into a sudden angle, and fell back upon itself. This was the only sound. It was a night for hearing too. He felt for his lantern and got out his steel to strike a light. Having cropped his flint, in groping about to find it, he forgot the direction in which he had stood; and when he got upon his feet again, after an unsuccessful search, felt himself so utterly at a loss, that, after walking a few steps with his hands stretched out before him, he determined to wait for the morning, rather than risk a fall over one of the slippery rocks in his attempt to return home. When he had sat there for some time, the rain began to fall in large though few drops; these were, however, but the splashes from the bucketfuls which were soon poured on his head. The wind, too, was loosed at the same time, and rushed on him with such violence, that though he dared not search for shelter lest he should fall over the rocks, he was glad to sit down on a large stone which he felt at his feet. The first flash of lightning, however, showed him the chapel itself, not more than ten yards off. He groped towards it immediately in the gloom, with his hands stretched out before him, right glad when he felt its rough stones. The wall once found, he soon discovered the path with his feet, and when he got home, was glad to go to rest at once.

He had not slept many hours before he was roused to visit a dying man in one of the neighboring houses. Hurrying on his clothes, he hastened to the place, where a crowd was gathered around the door, many of them dripping from the sea. The storm which he had seen the evening before had grown into a terrible tempest, during which a ship had been driven on the rocks and utterly wrecked. All the crew were drowned but one man, whom they dragged out of the surf and carried to Derby Haven. He had apparently, however, been saved from death in the water to die on the land, for he was so grievously bruised and cut by the rocks on which he had been thrown, that life was ready to leave him altogether. When Father Kelly came in he found him lying on the floor, wrapped up in such dry clothes as the people had at hand. He had begged them to fetch to him a priest. His back, he said, was broken, and he knew he could not live another hour; so the people fetched Father Kelly, as we have seen, and left the two together.

"Father," said the dying man, "will you hear the confession of a pirate and a murderer?" The priest, seeing there was no time to lose, signified his assent, and kneeling down by his side, bent his ear to listen.

Then the man, with strange breaks and ramblings in his speech, told him of murders out in the wide seas, and horrible recollections of cruelty and rapine.

"We took a Spanish ship some weeks ago," added the man, "and came in here to water, being a safe place; when I—God forgive my soul—I committed my last crime, and stole from the captain a box of gold he took out of the Spaniard. Another man and I were in the secret. We brought it with us, and buried it in the grave-yard of your little chapel, intending to make our escape from the ship on the first opportunity, find our way over here, recover, and enjoy the booty we had got."

"To whom did it belong?" said the priest.

"God knows," replied the man; "to me now, I suppose. Those who owned it can use it no more; the ship from which the captain took it went down, with all on board; we burnt her."

"What was the vessel's name?" asked Father Kelly.

"Name?" said the dying man. "There, take the gold and shrieve me; I have confessed!"

Then, without another word he died. The people buried him, and gathered up some few pieces of timber from the wreck of his ship, but nothing came ashore to show whether she was laden or not. They never knew her name, nor for a great while what she was, the priest not conceiving himself bound to tell them even so much of what he had heard in confession. Many years afterwards, the whole story was found in a book which the priest left behind him when he died.

The words "Take the gold" haunted the good father, long after the man who died in uttering them, had been committed to the ground. The chapel was finished, but not furnished; the fulfilment of the dream was incomplete. Many a night the priest lay awake arguing with himself the lawfulness of a search among the graves for the treasure which he had no doubt was hidden there. Suppose he could find it, should he credit the pirate's word about the death of its owner? Could he conscientiously appropriate it, not indeed to his own use, but to that of the chapel? He thought of the terrible sentence which fell on those who put unhalloved fire in their censers; he thought of the accursed thing found in the Jew's tent, which brought trouble

upon the whole people to which he belonged. Then again it looked as if the sin attached to the appropriation of this gold had been punished in the persons of the pirates who had taken it. It looked as if it were rescued from the service of the world to be devoted to that of the church—snatched from the devil himself to be given to St. Michael, his chief enemy.

On the whole, he decided upon using the gold, if he could find it. He must, however, be cautious in the search; he would not trust the people to look. It might not be there, and then he would be ashamed. There might be more than he thought, and they might be tempted to take some; or, if not that, he jealous at his retaining the possession of it himself. He would search alone. The conversation he had heard outside the chapel, while he listened on the eve of the storm, indicated the spot in which he should look.

Having therefore waited for a suitable moonlight night, he went very late to the churchyard with a spade. There was no one there. The shadow of the building fell upon the likely spot; he could work unperceived, even if some late returning fishermen were to pass that way. Half ashamed of the errand, he had not removed many spadefuls of earth from the grave he suspected, before he struck upon something hard. Stooping down, he felt for it with his hands; it was a heavy box. He took it up, smoothed down the soil, carried it straight home, double locked his door, and broke it open. It contained broad shining pieces of gold. They made such a noise on his table as he had never seen before. There was, moreover, in the box a necklace of large pearls. Gold for the chapel, jewels for the Madonna.

The church was furnished, the altar was decked, the image was bought, and round its neck he hung the string of fair, large pearls.

Father Kelly saw his dream fulfilled, and as success often produces conviction, he thanked St. Michael and all angels for having turned the robbers' booty into sacred treasure. So it was written in his book, but he told not whence these riches came. Some of the simple folk thought the Virgin herself had brought these jewels to the father. He, however, many a time while he sat on the rocks by the chapel looking out to seaward, and watching the white sails go by, wandered back to the questions whence these riches came, and whether, after all, they might not hide some after-course or other.

One evening as he sat there, a vessel came round the point, and dropped anchor in the haven. She drew his attention as being unlike any of the common coasting ships, or even of the traders which ventured on more distant voyages. She carried more canvass in proportion to her hull, and had her sails furled almost as soon as she had swung round with the tide.

Presently a boat came off from her, and was rowed to the shore just beneath the spot where he sat. Two men, apparently officers, got out and walking up to him, begged him to accompany them back to the ship, as they said one of their crew was dying, and needed the offices of a priest. He went with them at once without suspicion; a man who had been with him and heard the summons, immediately returning to Derby Haven.

The ghostly summons, however was a ruse; this was the sister-ship of the pirate that had been wrecked here in the storm—now some time past. The new-comers had learned her fate, and had landed to search for traces of the treasures she had on board. They had first taken the priest, as they thought with much probability, he could tell them whether the inhabitants of the village had plundered the wreck, and also whether any of her crew survived.

What they learned from Father Kelly, no one ever knew. Some of the men returned to the shore, strolled into the chapel, and doubtless recognised the necklace as one of the costliest items of their lost treasure. The next morning, the ship was gone, and the people, searching for their priest, who had not returned home at night, found the chapel sacked, and his corps set over the altar in the place where the image of the Madonna had been, with a knotted cord like a necklace tightly twisted round his throat.

The superstition of the natives never permitted them to use the chapel again. It gradually became a ruin; the roof fell in; the storms lashed the walls within as well as without; until at last it passed into the state in which it is to day. This was the story of the old man. He added that even now, whoever struck the walls and listened, could hear a moan within, and a noise like the jingling of money. "You can try it yourself," said he, "and find whether I have told you the truth."

Accepting this rather fearless challenge of the old gentleman's, I walked with him to the wall, and knocked, when, lo! I suddenly found that I had waked myself by striking my hand upon the stones by which I had sat down to rest. It was all a dream. I had fallen asleep thinking of the chapel, and watching the old man among the rocks. He was not in sight now. I was quite alone, and trying to replace a piece of skin which I had knocked off the knuckle of my middle-finger by rapping on a stone. I doubted even whether I had asked the old man any questions at all; so I shook myself, rubbed my eyes, and looking at my watch, happily found that I should not be too late for dinner if I set off on my return at once.

Directly we sat down, I asked my friend for the true history of the little church, and he told me there was none. "Now," said I, "that rec-

markable deficiency has been supplied to me;" and when the cloth was cleared away drew around the fire, and I told my host's and girls the true legend concerning the chapel on St. Michael's Island.

CHILDREN'S CONFIDENCE.—Do you know how to make children love you? I want the key that will unlock the innermost of their natures? Then sympathize with their ways. Never allow yourself to ridicule their little secrets. Never say, "Oh, ps! when they come to show a new kite or a new lous top; and "I can't be troubled," which hard knot won't be untied, and two and two nately refuse to make four on their small Kites and knots are the only precursors of thoughts and deeper trials which the parent one da' plead in vain to share! Don't lay any child's ideas, however odd and absurd may seem to you—let them find your sympathy in all their wonderments aspiration there any man so wise in his own conceit have forgotten there was once a time when was also a child? The little folks are too crowded out in this world—people generally to think they can be put any where, or met anything, or be crammed into any out-of-the-way corner, to awake themselves anyhow don't agree with these crossgrained wisens don't take much to make a child love you, trust in you, and the benefits are absolutely calculable. Oh, how much better it is for you to bring all their cares, and temptations, under the eye of a wise parent. What a safe-guard it is for them to feel that is always a kind ear to listen to their doleful griefs, and a gentle shoulder for their little nestle against! Respect their rights—think you can say bitter things in their presence or do unjust actions. They are the fine criminators of fair and unfair in the world, body says "When you feel inclined to be with children for being slow to learn, just minute to write with your left hand! I pr us from those precocious infants who spread ready made philosophies and casuist-checked little blockheads and infinitely able. Above all, do not be ashamed to know that you love them. Remember that will be men and women some day, and the best word which may influence their future should become a thing of moment in your—Life Illustrated.

THE GRAND VICTORIA FALLS IN AMERICA. Some very interesting news has been received from Dr. Livingstone. His description of the falls is worth quoting. He says:—"After our visit, I am inclined to believe that the Victoria Falls are the most wonderful in the world. It is the only grand sight the gentle A have to show. I tried to get them taken artist, but, to my regret, I failed. The is about eighteen hundred and sixty yards the river at this breadth leaps down three and ten feet, i. e. if my memory dece me, double the depth of the Niagara. From into which it falls, though, when seen from den Island, looks like the letter L, longed in the most remarkable zig-zag. The promontory formed by the zig-zag me to see the falls on the east side as well the Island, and being level and of the altitude as the bed of the river above the you can walk along and see the river some hundred feet, before you, and on both you jammed in a space of some twenty yards. The base of one promontory is a hundred and thirty paces from a dry fissure the base of another is only four hundred broad, measuring from the fall fissure river now was very low—never saw it so eed, people could wade from the north my Garden Island. This enabled me to whole thing plainly, but even now there feet of waterfall. The columns of vapor er; only two good ones I think. I could sure their height—probably over two feet. The lips of the fissure at Garden when measured by sextants, were eight but we could not throw a stone across may be more. Come when you may, no' be disappointed by the falls of Victoria bought canoes at Sinamanes and dropped the stream below Chicono. Kensalo has pediment, but a bysallitic dyke a little makes a dangerous rapid for canoes. Another dangerous rapid for canoes at M but a boat would through easily. The were but six inches above water, and led."

INDIAN SUMMER OF THE SOUL.—In the good man there is an Indian summer beautiful than that of the season; richer, and more sublime than the most glorious summer which the world knew—it is the summer of the soul. When the glow has departed, when the warmth of life is gone, and the buds and blossoms are changing to the zero and yellow of the mind of the good man, still ripe and anous, relaxes its labors, and the memoir well-spent life gush forth from the secret ains, enriching, rejoicing, and fertilizing trustful resignation of the Christian shed a sweet and holy warmth, and the soul a heavenly lustre is no longer restricted narrow confines of business, but soars yond the winter of hoary age, and dawns fully and happily upon that bright summer which await him within the gates of adise, evermore.